

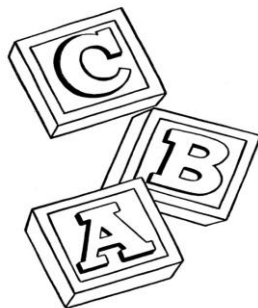
Learn the Alphabet
for wordaholics

Lathashree KS



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by

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DEDICATION

to

Claude Lévi-Strauss

Father of Structuralism

FOREWORD

Core to the haiku experience is *karumi*, the Japanese word for lightness that rolls so beautifully off the tongue. And of course 'haiku' itself comes from *hai* that is humour - not necessarily the funny kind, but that of good cheer.

When Lathashree asked me to write the foreword (and I'm still not sure I qualify), I was intrigued. My first responses, as a writer steeped in the ELH tradition which has been so well institutionalised in India by Angelee Deodhar and Kala Ramesh, was that these aren't haiku at all. Yes of course, Lathashree gleefully admits they aren't. But in my third and fourth and umpteenth reading (who knew foreword writing required so much homework?), I realised, we ELHers have gotten a bit carried away in our show-don't-tell and *kireji* and *keigo* and of course, those much misunderstood twins, *wabi* and *sabi*. We have forgotten that haiku needs to roll lightly off the tongue, while still resting in your mind, and bring a wisp of a smile to your lips (the Japanese would recoil at a full-blown laugh).

If you are a haiku poet, I beg you to read and cherish this book. Not because they adhere to any rules of s/l/s or breaks or still life or anything. Lathashree's alliterating triplets land you gently back on earth, from the gloomy clouds of ponderousness we haijin have become used to, into the freedom of *hai* and *karumi*. I am now of the opinion that this little book should be made mandatory reading for people returning from a heavy day's work. Like a splash of cool water, these verses drain the tiredness away. I will not spoil your joy by citing any verse (though 'X' is my favourite), but let you turn the pages. And when you finish, go back to the beginning, and start again.

Raamesh Gowri Raghavan
24 February 2020

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I was introduced to Basho and Haiku and many things Japanese as a little girl. As I grew older, I became familiar with structured writing in other languages such as Shakespeare's sonnets and meters in Sanskrit.

However, I continue to retain a fondness for the format of 5-7-5 with a-b-a rhyme scheme. Over the years, it grew into an obsession as I mastered the art of writing and learning English and I began to scribble short concepts such as the ones presented here. I am aware that they are not true English haikus -some are poetic while others are merely an exercise in alliteration. Some are haikuish as they capture a feeling-a moment in time; some are senryuish- hilarity amidst routine; some are just verse. However, I do believe they are all an act of surrender to the English dictionary and thesaurus. They are all long stories crammed into 3 lines. They are all micro poetry.

I hope you will enjoy reading these little word-sketches of things around us.

Lathashree KS, 2020

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A

*anchoring angel
against an amber agent-
an awesome amble*

Latha

walk under the clouds

B

*blurry, bubbly bump-
battling bluey, boring bards.
best bewitched! both burp!*

Latha

romance in the roadside dhaba

C

clandestine cabbie

cruised candied, closeted couple-

craftily crabby

Latha

forbidden love

D

done during dull day
dearest dutiful drama...
dreaming denim drey

Latha

monday blues

E

*even's enjoyment-
exhaled evaporation,
edgy entertainment*

Latha

+gif

F

*flopping, falling frog
falters for foisted fly-
feeling frazzled fog*

Latha

free meals

G

greying galoshes

grows glorious green garden...

gently gracious

Latha

Ms. Marple

H

heavy, huge hailstorm

hastens hostile hurricane...

harried horse hies home

Latha

when in trouble, go home

I

imitable inn

indorsed in illustration-

Ivy Inkwell Inn

Latha

budget travel

J

jaunty jackanape

jawed jelly-jam; jejune jesting

joined jaded jape

Latha

chilled out conversations

K

kerplunking kiddies

keep kicking knuckleballs...

kelpie keeping keys

Latha

the puddle is a magnet

L

little lightening

loosens laminar load-

listless lot lauding

Latha

first rain

M

magical monsoon

moves magnetic maiden's muse -

musical, mad moon

Latha

singing in the rain

N

natural nation

navigates numerous norms...

numinous notion

Latha

climate change

O

oaf on oasis

oompahs onomastic odes

on own orifice

Latha

Frrrrt

P

puddles plop-plopping-

pages passing piquant plots...

pale paneled painting

Latha

a book is all i need

Q

quiescent quarter

quilled quaint quizzical quibbles...

quick qualifier

Latha

who will win?

R

rapturous rainstorm

raising riotous riverbed-

rapid rills reform

Latha

change is normal

S

*sweet stormy shouting-
summer showers stabilize
sunflowers sprouting*

Latha

farmer's dream

T

*thunderbolt taunting
trainers dancing tic-tac-toe...
tree trolls tip-tapping*

Latha

the world is a dance floor

U

umber unicorn

unfurls unique umbrella...

unstrings uniform

Latha

winded rain

V

vapour variance

vaults varied veiled vestibules...

valid vigilance

Latha

waiting for the monsoon

W

weatherman's whisker

whittled whoppers with water-

wet whippersnapper

Latha

exit polls

X

xanthic xysticus

xeroxed xerosere xysts:

xenic xanadu

Latha

spider webs on a porch

Y

yammering yabbers'

young, yokelish yodelling

yanks yelling yatchers

Latha

sales and marketing

Z

zany zoot, zooming

zaffre zeolitic zoospores-

zingy zig-zagging

Latha

under the microscope

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The compilation of these sketches happened mostly in 2016-17 as I shared it on a Whatsapp group amongst friends and family with relevant emojis. I am most grateful to Prateek Chakraborty for the immediate responses, editing and sincere criticism. I also am grateful for the college memories of sitting on the drive and reading prose and poetry with Shilpa, Noor, Bindu, Raj and Ritu. Much thanks to my English teacher, Mrs. Radha Ramaswamy who patiently read my early works in the 1990s and taught me that one becomes a writer by reading and writing every day.

ABOUT



LATHASHREE KS is based in Bangalore and works as a freelance teacher in Indian History and Archaeology.



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--The End--

